

Frequently Asked Questions about the ASPIRE Program

What are the benefits of the ASPIRE Program?

Through ASPIRE, scholars earn 3 hours of undergraduate college credit, conduct mentor-supported research, develop tools to promote an understanding of medical research, and experience networking opportunities for career building.

What is an average day in the life of an ASPIRE student?

This varies based on your research and as the program progresses. Each student is required to attend approximately six hours of coursework and seminars per week during the month of June, reducing to one hour of seminar per week in July. Courses and seminars focus on research design, statistics, ethics, and career development topics geared toward undergraduate and predoctoral students. Whenever the students are not in class or seminar, they are expected to be working on research in some capacity with a mentor or that mentor's team. ASPIRE participants must commit full-time effort to the program (research and classes), typically defined as 40 hours per week.

Why is there tuition required to participate in the program?

Unlike many other summer research programs, ASPIRE offers both didactic coursework and clinical research experience. The tuition covers the course work component and running the program.

What projects might I work on?

The kinds of research projects that students work on is constantly evolving and vary based on each individual mentor pairing.

How will I be paired with a mentor?

We use your research interests and do our best to match you with a mentor that aligns with your goals. Once admitted, the ASPIRE Project Manager will reach out to you to complete a brief questionnaire where you can include your top areas of interest and any mentors you are currently working with on campus or would be interested in working with.*

**Mentor pairings depend on how many clinical research mentors are available to mentor each summer*

How many students are accepted to ASPIRE each year?

Each year we admit 15-25 applicants.

When will decisions be released?

Approximately mid-late March.

What is there to do in St. Louis?

St. Louis is a thriving city with much to offer. There are many reasons to consider living here for a summer:

- Work a short walk from [the Loop](#). Washington University also has easy access to public transportation.
- [The City Museum](#) (Hint: it's not a museum. Think grown-up indoor playground.)
- The [Muny's Summer 2021 season of musicals in Forest Park](#). Free seating!
- [Free Wednesday summer concerts](#) at the [Missouri Botanical Gardens](#)
- [Shakespeare Festival St Louis](#)

- [4th of July in St. Louis](#)
- [Explore St. Louis](#)
- [Washington University Community Guide to the City](#)

The medical campus is located in the Central West End, which has many great activities. For some current events, visit <https://cwescene.com/>

[Forest Park](#) is one of the nation's largest urban parks and is adjacent to the medical campus, and includes the [Saint Louis Zoo](#), the [Saint Louis Science Center](#) (including the [McDonnell Planetarium](#)), the [Saint Louis Art Museum](#), the [Missouri History Museum](#), and [The MUNY](#) (outdoor musical theater).

Additional resources: <https://explorestlouis.com/>

Application Questions

Is the ASPIRE Program open to masters students?

No, you must be currently enrolled as an undergraduate in order to be eligible for ASPIRE. This also means that if you graduated the spring prior to the program start, you are not eligible.

I am a senior graduating in May. Can I still apply for the program?

No. Unfortunately, students are required to be actively enrolled in either a 4-year undergraduate program. Graduating students are not considered actively enrolled, regardless of any planned matriculation in the fall.

Do I need previous Clinical Research Experience?

No prior clinical research experience is required.

Is the ASPIRE program open to international students?

Yes, as long as you are enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student in a US institution. The ASPIRE program does not sponsor student Visas.

Is my letter of recommendation due on the same day as the application?

All application materials are due by the application deadline (mid-February) to be considered complete. We recommend requesting your recommendation letter as soon as possible to ensure it is received by the deadline.

Where and how do I apply?

To apply during the scheduled application cycle (November 1-February20), visit <https://gradadmit.wustl.edu/apply/?sr=0eeae99b-ed1e-4a41-9dc3-0994e27f79a8>

Summer Program Questions

During what period is the participant supposed to be present at Washington University?

You must be on campus for the entire 8 weeks of the program (dates range from June 1-July 31).

My school is on quarters/trimesters so I cannot be there until early June. Is this a problem?

Generally, students are expected to be on campus for the full 8 weeks (starting on June 1st). If you know in advance that this may be an issue, please let us know right away so that we can review and determine if a delayed start can be accommodated.

Can I make up time by staying past the program end date?

No.

Can I attend the program virtually?

No. Students are required to be in the St. Louis area for the duration of the program unless the program needs to move to a virtual format.

Will the university find me housing?

We do not provide housing for ASPIRE students. Please visit the websites below for possible housing options. :

[WU: Summer Housing](#)

[WU: Apartment Referral Service](#)

Will the university provide parking if I choose to live off campus?

We do not provide parking, and students are welcome to purchase a summer parking pass through Parking and Transportation Services. However, ASPIRE students will receive a free Metro U-Pass for the summer for the Metro STL Transit.

Can I take another summer course while I'm in the ASPIRE program?

The ASPIRE program does not explicitly prohibit taking a course or working an additional job while you are in the program. However, do note that the time commitment while you are in the program is that of a full-time equivalent position (~40 hours a week), plus course requirements in June. Most will find it difficult to pursue both and be successful in the program.

Will I have a roommate during the program?

If you would like to coordinate housing with another ASPIRE student, you can. Our program coordinator will connect all enrolled students prior to the summer and you can coordinate housing and/or meet one another.

Will I be issued an ID card?

After you arrive and complete your initial paperwork, we will process the creation of a WashU student ID card. Your ID card verifies your identity and affiliation with the University, holds your personal access to buildings, labs, and suites and lets you utilize the WashU shuttle system as well as Metro STL Transit with a U-Pass from Parking and Transportation.

Will I have access to the Washington University athletic facilities?

Yes! First, get a Washington University ID card. With this card, you can get access to the Athletic Complex on the Danforth Campus. You can purchase monthly or full summer passes.

Will I have access to the Washington University library facilities?

Yes! All ASPIRE trainees will have access to Becker Medical Library and its resources.

Are there any scholarships available?

Yes. A limited number of scholarships are available for currently attending Washington University students from underrepresented groups in research and medicine. The scholarship includes allowances for tuition, housing, and a stipend.